



Food and Nutrition Policy

Ferndale Primary School
School Policies
AUT 2025

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- staff, parents/ carers and pupils receive clear guidance about food provision during the school day;
- appropriate messages about food and nutrition are reinforced to help children develop healthy habits;
- a consistent and co-ordinated approach to teaching and learning about food is delivered.

2. Food Standards for Schools

As part of the School Food Plan, a set of standards for all food served in schools was launched by the Department for Education. These standards are mandatory for all maintained schools and since 2014 they are an explicit requirement within funding agreements.

Eating in school should be a pleasurable experience. These school food standards are intended to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure they obtain the energy and nutrition they need across the whole school day, which includes food provided for breakfast, mid-morning snacks, lunch, and after school clubs.

The standards do not apply:

- to parties or celebrations to mark religious or cultural occasions
- for fund raising events
- to rewards for achievement, good behaviour or effort
- for use in teaching food preparation and cookery skills, including where the food prepared is served to pupils as part of a school lunch
- on an occasional basis by parents or pupils

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/school-food-standards-practical-guide>

3. Early Years Foundation Stage Nutritional Guidance

This Food and Nutrition policy is linked to the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance - Guidance for group and school-based providers and childminders in England (May 2025).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6839b752210698b3364e86fc/Early_years_foundation_stage_nutrition_guidance.pdf

This DfE nutritional guidance recognises that the early years are a crucial time to reduce health inequalities and set the foundations for a lifetime of good health. It states that providing healthy, balanced and nutritious food ensures that all children:

- get the right amount of nutrients and energy they need while they are growing rapidly, which is especially important for children who might not have access to healthy food at home. This can help prevent children from becoming overweight or obese.
- develop positive eating habits early on. Children's early experiences with food can shape future eating habits. This can impact children's long-term health including maintaining a healthy weight, and good oral health.

This guidance is followed in order to meet the EYFS requirement '*Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these must be healthy, balanced and nutritious*'.

4. Allergies and medical needs

Where children have food allergies, we work closely with families to support children with allergies or intolerances. Ongoing discussions are had with parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known food allergies and intolerances. This information is kept up to date and shared with all staff, including first aiders. At Ferndale, due to severe allergies to nuts, we are a nut-free school. Products containing nuts are not allowed in school. If children bring these in, they are not allowed to consume these.

5. Staff training

Allocated staff receive regular training on Food hygiene including food handling and preparation. As well as this, there are always members of staff who have Paediatric First Aid and First Aid Training across school, meeting any requirements necessary. Staff receive face- to face and refresher training within the recommended time scales.

6. Food and drink throughout the school day

6.1 Breakfast

On the gate each morning, children can access a 'grab and go' bagel. This is part of the National School Breakfast programme, which aims to provide children with an opportunity to have something to eat before the school day begins. Bagels are quartered and uptake is monitored. Breakfast Club and After School Club is provided by Junior Adventures Group, who cater for children following the required standards.

6.2 Snacks and drinks

Snacks can play an important part of the diet of children and young people and can contribute positively towards a balanced diet. Snacks provide an opportunity to have 1 of your 5-a-day, as well as include other important nutrients in the diet. As part of the School Food Standards, schools are only able to provide fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds as a snack. Dried fruit should not be offered as a snack and should only be offered at mealtimes within a meal/dessert.

The Government's school fruit and vegetable scheme entitles all children in Early Years and KS1 to one piece of fruit and / or vegetable per day. Children across school are allowed to bring one small snack from home. We encourage snacks to be less than 100 calories. Children have access to drinking water throughout the day. Water fountains are available for children to refill their water bottles which are taken to and from school. Fizzy pop and energy drinks are not allowed in school.

6.3 Lunchtime

All children in Reception to Year 2 are able to have Universal Free School Meals. We actively promote this and encourage parents to take up this offer.

Our school meals are provided by Dolce Catering, who comply to the mandatory food standards. Children not in KS2 (including 30 hour nursery) are able to pay for school meals if they are not in receipt of Free School Meals. Dolce caterers cater for children with different dietary requirements including allergies and intolerances. They liaise directly with parents when required.

<https://www.dolce.co.uk/education-catering/primary-school/>

Children are able to bring in a packed lunch from home. We strongly encourage parents/ carers to provide a healthy, nutritional packed lunch. Lunchtime staff monitor the content of packed lunches and relay any concerns about inappropriate food to staff who discuss this with parents/ carers.

We are unable to refrigerate or heat up any food brought in from home. Below are some tips on keeping food safe and fresh. Parents/ carers should:

- ensure the food is suitable for their child's individual developmental needs and prepared in a way to prevent choking.
- for perishable items that should be kept cool, pack food in insulated sealed bags. If ice packs are unavailable, the '4-hour rule' can be applied. This rule allows food to be stored outside of chilled conditions for up to 4 hours, but this should only be done once during the entire storage.
- clearly label their child's name on the lunch bag and detail the contents.
- pack foods that can safely be kept at room temperature as there is no refrigerated area for storing food brought from home.

At Ferndale, lunchtime is promoted as a positive social experience. The dining areas are pleasant and welcoming. Children sit down with peers whilst eating and trained lunchtime leaders supervise the children whilst eating and outside.

Lunchtime also provides an opportunity for children to get moving and be active. Lunchtime leaders and play leaders regularly provide activities to engage children in games and activities. As well as being encouraged to be active, children's wellness is also considered- children can choose to go to sit on benches, go the calm corner for mindfulness activities such as colouring.

6.4 Food in Early Years

As previously mentioned, guidance provided in the DfE's Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance - Guidance for group and school-based providers and childminders in England May 2025 is followed in school as well as the Statutory Framework for Early Years.

As part of the [EYFS framework](#), information about children's special dietary requirements – including food allergies and intolerances – must be obtained, recorded and acted upon before they attend. This information must be kept up to date by having ongoing conversations with parents and carers.

At each mealtime and snack time a member of staff must be responsible for checking that the food being served to each child meets all their dietary requirements and is prepared in a way to prevent choking.

In Early Years, any food brought in from home for snack or lunch must be prepared at home in a manner that is suitable for a child's age and stage of development. For example, grapes must be quartered and cut lengthways or children will not be able to eat these at school. Guidance from the Food Standards Agency regarding potential choking is displayed in the setting and shared with parents and staff. See the links below and Appendices 1 and 2.

Children always sit down for snack and lunchtime in Early Years. There is always a Paediatric First Aid Trained member of staff when children are eating.

https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/Early%20Years%20Choking%20Hazards%20Poster_English.pdf

https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2021/09/Early-Years-Choking-Hazards-Table_FINAL_21-Sept-2021.pdf

7. Food in the curriculum

At Ferndale, we recognise that cooking is a great experience for children which helps to create a positive relationship with food and that some children have limited opportunities to cook or learn about food at home. Across school, from Nursery to Year 6, there are opportunities for children to try, prepare and cook a range of different dishes from across the globe.

In our Science curriculum, children learn about the importance of eating a balanced diet, knowing that no food is 'bad' and that portion control is important relevant to the different food groups. They learn that a balanced diet, and regular physical activity are lifelong habits that positively impact health. The Eatwell Guide uses government advice to show what a healthy and balanced diet looks like. It shows what a balance of foods should look like in one day or over a whole week. The advice in the Eatwell Guide applies to children from the age of 2 years. A healthy, balanced diet is based on the 4 main food groups (fruit and vegetables; potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates; dairy or dairy alternatives; and beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins). These provide essential nutrients to help children grow and develop. (See Appendix 3.)

We also have opportunities for children to plant seeds, care for the plants and grow food in school. This begins in our 'garden room' in Early Years where children grow beans, tomatoes and cucumbers. Eating the food we have grown helps teach children about sustainability from a young age.

8. Celebrations

Many families like to celebrate their child's birthday and other special events traditionally by bringing in sweets to share. This can mean that some children are eating these unhealthy foods several times a week. At Ferndale, instead of doing this, we recommend that children wear a birthday badge/ sash or non-uniform to celebrate.

Policy agreed:

Policy review date: Autumn 2026



Early years choking hazards food safety advice

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For babies and young children, food can be a choking hazard, especially when they do not chew their food well or they try to swallow it whole.

Choking can happen with any foods, but 'firm foods', bones and small round foods that can easily get stuck in the throat present a higher risk. Therefore, care givers should follow these five essential steps:

- 1** Make sure food is **suitably prepared and served** for babies and children under 5 years old. For suitable foods, see <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>. Introduce babies to solid foods from around 6 months of age.
- 2** **Think about size, shape and texture of food.** Cut food into narrow batons, avoid round shapes and firm foods. Firm fruit & vegetables can be softened by cooking.
- 3** Ensure that babies and young children are **alert and seated safely upright** in a highchair or appropriately sized low chair whilst eating.
- 4** **Babies and young children should be supervised at all times** while eating. You will be able to identify the early signs of choking and prevent harm.
- 5** **Encourage babies and young children to chew food well.** Teach children how to chew and swallow food properly, and ensure they take their time during meals. This will reduce their risk of choking.

Care givers and parents should be familiar with how to respond to a choking incident in line with guidance on first aid for children:

How to stop a child from choking: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/>

How to resuscitate a child: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-resuscitate-a-child/>

Early years food choking hazards



Below is a table of advice on key foods for care givers who are involved with preparing and serving food for babies and young children (under 5 years old)

Vegetable and fruits	Advice
Pips or stones in fruit	Always check beforehand and remove hard pips or stones from fruit.
Small fruits	Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then again cut them in halves (quarters).
Large fruits and firm fruits	Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. For very young children, consider grating or mashing firm fruits, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Vegetables	Cut vegetables like carrots, cucumber and celery into narrow batons. For very young children consider grating or mashing firm vegetables and legumes like butter beans, chickpeas and tofu, or softening them up by steaming or simmering.
Skin on fruit and vegetables	Consider removing the skin from fruit and vegetables, especially for very young children. Peeled fruit and vegetables can be swallowed more easily.
Cooking fruit and vegetables	Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, yam and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft. Serve cut into slices or narrow batons.
Meat and fish	Advice
Sausages and hot dogs	Cut sausages and hot dogs into short strips. Cut them in half and then lengthways or as thinly as possible. Peeling the skin off the sausages helps them to be swallowed more easily.
Meat or fish	Remove bones from meat or fish. Cut meat into strips as thinly as possible. Remove skin and fat from meat and fish, it will help the food pass smoothly down the throat.
Cheese	Advice
Grate or cut cheese	Grate or cut cheese into short strips. Cut lumps of cheese as narrow as possible.
Nuts and seeds	Advice
Chop or flake whole nuts	Chop or flake whole nuts, peanuts and seeds. Whole nuts should not be given to children under five years old.
Bread	Advice
White bread and other breads	White bread can form a ball shape with a dough-like texture at the back of a child's throat, if not chewed properly. Brown bread or toasted white bread are good alternatives. Cut bread, chapatis, naan bread and other breads into narrow strips.

Snacks and other foods	Advice
Popcorn	Do not give babies and young children popcorn.
Chewing gum and marshmallows	Do not give babies and young children chewing gum or marshmallows.
Peanut butter	Do not give babies and young children peanut butter on its own, only use as a spread.
Jelly cubes	Do not give babies and young children raw jelly cubes.
Boiled sweets and ice cubes	Do not give babies and young children boiled, hard, gooey, sticky or cough sweets, or ice cubes.
Raisins and other dried fruits	Do not give babies under the age of 1 whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.

Make sure food is prepared appropriately for children under 5 years old, see: <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/>

It is also advisable that care givers are familiar with how to respond to a choking incident, see: How to stop a child from

choking: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-stop-a-child-from-choking/>

and How to resuscitate a child: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/how-to-resuscitate-a-child/>

A healthy balanced diet for children

Food group	Examples of food included	Main nutrients provided	Recommended serving
Fruit and vegetables	Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruit, vegetables, and pulses	Carotenes (a form of vitamin A), vitamin C, zinc, iron, and fibre	At least 5 portions each day Provide a portion as part of each main meal (breakfast, lunch and tea) and with some snacks
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates	Bread, potatoes and sweet potatoes, starchy root vegetables, pasta, noodles, rice, other grains, breakfast cereals	Carbohydrate, fibre, B vitamins and iron	4 portions each day Provide a portion as part of each meal (breakfast, lunch and tea) and provide as part of at least one snack each day
Dairy and alternatives	Milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais	Protein, calcium, and vitamin A	3 portions each day Provided as part of meals, snacks and drink
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	Meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, eggs, beans, pulses, nuts	Protein, iron, zinc, omega 3 fatty acids, vitamins A and D	2 portions each day Provide a portion as part of lunch and tea (two to three portions for vegetarian children)